GLOBAL SUMMIT ON ANTI-CORRUPTION: WHAT MR PRESIDENT SHOULD BE TELLING THE WORLD

[RTI-COALITION GHANA](https://www.facebook.com/RTICoalitionGhana/)·[THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2016](https://www.facebook.com/notes/rti-coalition-ghana/global-summit-on-anti-corruption-what-mr-president-should-be-telling-the-world/1161851983849795/)·3 MINUTES

On 12th May, 2016, world leaders will be meeting in London, United Kingdom for the Global Anti-Corruption Summit. This meeting would provide an opportunity for world leaders to showcase their commitment to the fight against corruption both locally and internationally. Clearly, Ghana’s participation at the upcoming summit will mark yet another important step for the government of Ghana to demonstrate its commitment to the fight against corruption.

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Africa office would like to call on His Excellency, President John Dramani Mahama to make concrete commitments on the passage of an effective and efficient right to information legislation in Ghana.

Efforts by civil society organisations in Ghana to secure the passage of the right to information Bill has proved abortive for more than a decade. Several governments have made promises to put the legislation in place but failed to do so despite their proclaimed commitment to the fight against corruption. Ongoing conversations around open contracting and beneficial ownership have brought to the limelight the value of access to information in helping to expose those who make substantial economic gains but are able to hide their identities in the mist of opaque company structures. The availability of the means for the public to scrutinize activities of public institutions and private bodies performing public functions through guaranteed access to information helps in the fight against corruption and promotes transparency.

If His Excellency gets an opportunity to address the summit, CHRI would like Mr. President to tell not only Ghanaians but the world at large how government has demonstrated efforts as part of the fight against corruption, to ensure the passage of the RTI Bill since he assumed power in 2012.

We recall that Mr. President has on several platforms indicated that when the Bill gets to his table he would sign it without delay. But we have not heard the President requesting Parliament to, as a matter of urgency, pass the most important anti-corruption tool – the RTI Bill – into law. As much as we understand that the executive may not wish to interfere with the work of the legislature in the spirit of separation of powers; we also know that His Excellency, the President can request for the RTI Bill to be passed under a certificate of urgency if His Excellency so wishes; as has been the case with some other Bills.

We would like to draw the attention of Mr. President that under the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative, Ghana has for the second time running made commitments in its National Action Plan to pass the RTI Bill which has been in Parliament since 2013. Specifically, on transparency, the government of Ghana on behalf of the people of Ghana committed among other things, to lobby Parliament to pass the Bill by the end of, 2013. But three years on, the Bill is yet to be passed. The Bill currently at the consideration stage has thoroughly been reviewed by the Select Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs since December 2014, making it a very robust and effective tool for fighting corruption.

Even though the Bill has gone through the first and second readings and has been referred to the consideration stage, Parliament has hastened very slowly with the consideration processes. There is currently no clear indication as to how Parliament is planning to ensure that the Bill is passed before the elections in November, 2016. There is also nothing to show that the Executive is lobbying or engaging Parliament, as it committed to do in its OGP action plans, to ensure that the Bill is passed before June 2016.

As His Excellency makes further commitments at the Global Summit to eradicate corruption at home, it is our hope that he will also present a roadmap to the world and to Ghanaians on how he plans to fulfill governments OGP commitment to engage Parliament for the speedy passage of the RTI Bill before June 2016.

ISSUED BY THE COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE (CHRI), AFRICA OFFICE, SECRETARIAT TO THE COALITION ON THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION, GHANA

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